

TV's Digital Conversion

General Information

On February 17, 2009 all full-power broadcast television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and begin broadcasting only in digital. Digital broadcasting will allow stations to offer improved picture and sound quality and additional channels.

Consumers who rely on antennas (including outside antennas and "rabbit ears") to receive over-the-air broadcast signals on TV sets having only analog tuners will need to obtain separate digital-to-analog **set-top converter** boxes to watch over-the-air TV. These boxes receive digital signals and convert them into analog format for display on analog TVs. Analog sets connected to such converter boxes will display digital broadcasts, but not necessarily in the full, original digital quality.

If you already have a good VHF and UHF antenna, either indoors or on your roof, you don't have to buy an antenna that is "HD Ready." DTV broadcasters have been assigned channels in the VHF and UHF bands, between 54 and 700 MHz, where analog channels 2 to 51 are now. Therefore, as long as a DTV signal is available, your existing antenna should still work after the transition is complete.

Between Jan. 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, all U.S. households will be eligible to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has responsibility for administering the coupon program. (Please note that these coupons will expire 90 days after mailing). More information can be found at www.DTV2009.gov.

Cable subscribers may need new DTV equipment to view DTV programming in digital format. You should ask your cable provider what you will need and when.

Satellite subscribers may need new DTV equipment to receive and view **high definition** digital programming. You should ask your satellite company what you will need and when.

What Do I Do with My Old TV?

1. As indicated above, you can continue to use the older TV by purchasing and attaching a set-top converter to your existing antennae/TV hookup. This will allow you to watch TV, but may not provide for a high-definition picture.
2. Donate your working television to local non-profits such as Goodwill, the Salvation Army, or other similar agencies.
3. Recycle your television through **local electronics collection programs**¹, **local electronics recycling firms**², **through local retailers**³, or through manufacturers' take-back/mail-in programs (visit specific manufacturer web sites).

Why should I not throw my TV away?

If properly managed as universal waste, electronics waste, including TVs and computers, is not hazardous. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, e-waste is an issue of resource conservation. In short, electronics contain many re-usable and valuable raw materials. However, if improperly disposed of or illegally dumped, electronics can pose a serious **risk to the environment**⁴. Improper disposal of this material is not environmentally responsible.

Footnotes

1. visit website <http://www.eiae.org/>
2. visit website <http://www.mygreenelectronics.org>
3. visit websites (as examples only) <http://www.officedepot.com/> and <http://www.bestbuy.com/>
4. visit website <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/ecycling>